

Russian National Guard to Partner With Belarus Police Amid Protests

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Belarus has been gripped by mass protests since the country's Aug. 9 election that handed Lukashenko a sixth presidential term. **EPA / TASS**

The Russian National Guard has signed a cooperation agreement with Belarus' police force to combat "terrorism and extremism," Interfax [reported](#) Friday.

The agreement comes amid months of opposition protests in Belarus against the country's disputed presidential election. Belarus' Moscow-backed President Alexander Lukashenko has accused the opposition of being backed by the West and has jailed several opposition figures on charges of attempting to seize power.

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The two law-enforcement agencies will cooperate on protecting public order and ensuring public safety and the protection of important state facilities and special cargo as well as the fight against terrorism and extremism, Interfax reported, citing the agreement on Belarus'

legal portal.

The National Guard and the Belarusian interior ministry will also cooperate on state control of arms circulation, ensuring the safety of fuel and energy facilities, protecting important and sensitive facilities and providing support in combating crime.

The agreement "made in the city of Minsk on Nov. 19, 2020" comes into force from the date of its signing.

Belarus has been gripped by mass protests since the country's Aug. 9 election that handed Lukashenko a sixth term, with tens of thousands of Belarusians calling for the longtime leader's resignation.

On Aug. 27, Russian President Vladimir Putin [announced](#) that Russia had formed a reserve of law enforcement officers near the Belarusian border at Lukashenko's request to be deployed in case "extremists in Belarus cross a line.

"But we also agreed that it will not be used until the situation gets out of control and until extremist elements, hiding behind political slogans, cross certain borders, start robbery, start setting fire to cars, at home, banks, seize administrative buildings and so on," Putin had said.

During the presidents' Sept. 14 meeting in Sochi, an agreement was reached for this reserve of Russian security forces to be [withdrawn](#).

The next month, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin ordered negotiations to begin on a cooperation agreement between the Russian National Guard and the Belarusian interior ministry.

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